



Emergency department patient presentations during the 2009 heatwaves in Adelaide

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Abstract:

While the full impact of climate change is uncertain, it has been widely documented to be responsible for the extreme weather conditions which are experienced in many places around the world. High temperatures during summer are the expected norm for the population living in Adelaide South Australia (SA) and if temperatures reach and remain in the upper thirties centigrade they can be expected to meet the Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology definition of a "heatwave". A number of studies have shown that there is a direct link between the increase in mortality and morbidity among emergency department (ED) patient presentations and periods of extreme heat. Heatwave conditions affect individuals with particular health problems such as cardiovascular, renal or mental health which results in an increase in the patient presentations to the emergency department (ED). This paper describes the findings from the initial phase of a long-term research project investigating the effects of heatwave exposure on particular health conditions with respect to patient presentations (ICD-10 categories) to ED's in metropolitan Adelaide, South Australia. The initial results from one public hospital during two heatwave periods experienced in 2009 are presented in this paper. The heat wave events were compared to non-heat wave periods before and after each heat wave. Demographic information as well as diagnostic descriptors are also presented.

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Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Temperature

Temperature: Extreme Heat

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal, Urban

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Non-United States: Australasia

Health Impact: ☐

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Cardiovascular Effect, Injury, Mental Health/Stress, Respiratory Effect, Urologic Effect, Other Health Impact

Other Health Impact: heat related illness; emergency department presentations

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: ☐

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Elderly

Resource Type: ☐

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: ☐

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified